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Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)

Summary record of the 7th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 16 October 2001, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Hasmy ..... (Malaysia)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 18: Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (Territories not covered under other agenda items) (*continued*)

Agenda item 91: Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories transmitted under Article 73 *e* of the Charter of the United Nations (*continued*)

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Agenda item 94: Offers by Member States of study and training facilities for inhabitants of Non-Self-Governing Territories (*continued*)

Draft resolution on the question of information from Non-Self-Governing Territories transmitted under Article 73 e of the Charter of the United Nations (A/56/23, chapter XIII, section A)

1. *A recorded vote was taken.*

In favour:

Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Belarus, Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Cambodia, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guyana, Haiti, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Mexico, Morocco, Myanmar, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Oman, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, San Marino, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Spain, Sudan, Swaziland, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Venezuela, Yugoslavia, Zambia.

Against:

None.

Abstaining:

France, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

2. *The draft resolution was adopted by 86 votes to none with 3 abstentions.*

3. **Ms. Howe-Jones** (United Kingdom) said that her country, as in previous years, had abstained in the vote on the draft resolution. The United Kingdom did not take issue with the main objective of the resolution and would continue to meet its obligations fully in respect of its overseas Territories.

4. However, the final decision as to whether a Non-Self-Governing Territory had reached a level of self-government sufficient to relieve the administering Power of the obligation to submit information under Article 73 (e) of the Charter lay with the Government of the Territory concerned and its administering Power, not with the General Assembly.

Draft resolution on economic and other activities which affect the interest of the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories, submitted under agenda items 92 and 18 (A/56/23, chapter XIII, part B)

5. *A recorded vote was taken.*

In favour:

Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Belarus, Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guyana, Haiti, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Mexico, Myanmar, Namibia, Netherlands,

New Zealand, Norway, Oman, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, San Marino, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Spain, Sudan, Swaziland, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yugoslavia, Zambia.

Against:

United States of America.

Abstaining:

France, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

6. *The draft resolution was adopted by 94 votes to 1, with 2 abstentions.*

Draft decision on military activities and arrangements by colonial Powers in Territories under their administration, submitted under agenda items 92 and 18 (A/56/23, chapter XIII, part H)

7. *A recorded vote was taken.*

In favour:

Algeria, Angola, Argentina, Bahrain, Belarus, Bolivia, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Chile, China, Colombia, Cyprus, Djibouti, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Fiji, Gambia, Ghana, Guyana, Haiti, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jamaica, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mexico, Myanmar, Namibia, Oman, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Qatar, Saint Lucia, Singapore, Sudan, Swaziland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Zambia.

Against:

Andorra, Armenia, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Yugoslavia.

Abstaining:

None.

8. *The draft resolution was adopted by 55 votes to 40.*

9. **Mr. Schelstraete** (Belgium), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that the European Union had for some years maintained a dialogue with the Special Committee on decolonization with the aim of building a broader consensus. It acknowledged the progress achieved in the work of the Special Committee over the past few years and hoped that the latter would continue its efforts to ensure that it submitted balanced texts capable of attracting broad support.

10. Regrettably, as in previous years, the European Union was compelled to reiterate its objections regarding the draft decision on military activities, since the question covered by the draft decision fell outside the Committee's competence. Accordingly, the member States of the European Union had voted against the draft decision.

Draft resolution on implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples by the specialized agencies and the international institutions associated with the United Nations, submitted under agenda items 93 and 12 (A/56/23, chapter XIII, part C)

11. *A recorded vote was taken.*

In favour:

Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Belarus, Bolivia, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Fiji, Ghana, Guyana, Haiti, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jamaica, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mexico, Morocco, Myanmar, Namibia, New Zealand, Oman, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Qatar, Saint Lucia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Sudan, Swaziland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Tunisia, United Arab

Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia.

Against:

None.

Abstaining:

Andorra, Armenia, Australia, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Yugoslavia.

12. *The draft resolution was adopted by 65 to none, with 40 abstentions.*

13. **Mr. Schelstraete** (Belgium), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that the European Union renewed its support for the specialized agencies in their efforts to offer assistance to Non-Self-Governing Territories in the humanitarian, technical and educational fields. At the same time, the mandates of those agencies must be scrupulously respected, and that was why the member States of the European Union had abstained in the vote on the draft resolution.

14. **Mr. Lewis** (Antigua and Barbuda) said that his delegation had voted in favour of the resolution just adopted because it served as the mandate for the United Nations system to provide assistance to the Non-Self-Governing Territories. The Economic and Social Council continued to adopt a similar resolution on the issue. A review of the implementation of resolutions on that issue indicated that much remained to be done. Most United Nations bodies still had not strengthened existing measures of support or formulated concrete proposals to that effect, as had been called for repeatedly in those resolutions. The number of reports on the implementation also remained insufficient.

15. His delegation noted that in the medium-term plan it was stated that assistance from the specialized agencies to the Non-Self-Governing Territories was coordinated by the secretariat of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. That coordination function would be better discharged by an agency, such as the United Nations Development Programme, which had a proven track record in assisting the Territories, so that the secretariat could focus on the mandate which the General Assembly had given it, including the initiation of long-delayed action on the unimplemented Plan of Action for the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism.

16. He regretted that the Minister of State for External Affairs of the United States Virgin Islands had decided not to address the Fourth Committee on the agenda item under discussion, after encountering unprecedented and unacceptable difficulties. The valuable information provided to the Committee over the past decade or more by that territorial Government had helped to formulate many of the most relevant paragraphs of the resolution. Because of the absence of the representative of that Government, the resolution on the specialized agencies reflected little if any new information.

17. His delegation was concerned that the lack of consensus on the specialized agencies resolution was almost accepted as routine, as was also the case in the Economic and Social Council. The Committee and the Council should take a close look at what constituted objectionable language in the resolution, so that consensus could be achieved in that most important area.

Draft resolution on offers by Member States of study and training facilities for inhabitants of Non-Self-Governing Territories, submitted under agenda item 94 (A/C.4/56/L.3)

18. **The Chairman** said that Jamaica had joined the sponsors of the draft resolution.

19. *The draft resolution was adopted.*

Financial implications of draft resolutions

20. **Ms. Wilkinson** (Secretary of the Committee), referring to the recommendations of the Special Committee contained in its report (A/56/23, chap. XIII, D-F), said that their implementation would not give rise to additional costs or programmatic changes to the proposed programme budget for the 2002-2003 biennium. Implementation of paragraphs 12 and 13 of draft resolution A/C.4/56/L.2 would also be without financial implications for the regular budget.

Draft resolution on the question of Western Sahara, submitted under agenda item 18 (A/C.4/56/L.2)

21. **The Chairman** said that the word "in" should be replaced by the word "and" in the twelfth preambular paragraph of the English text.

22. *The draft resolution, as orally revised, was adopted.*

23. **Mr. Diop** (Senegal) said that his delegation joined in welcoming the adoption without a vote of the draft resolution which had been made possible by the spirit of cooperation demonstrated by all delegations and had given rise to new hopes. His delegation supported the efforts of the Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy aimed at incorporating the key elements of a political solution to the question of the territory's status in the draft Framework Agreement on the Status of Western Sahara.

24. His delegation did not doubt that the Committee, in view of the deadlock surrounding the question of the referendum, would seek to strengthen the new momentum for peace by fully supporting the highly laudable efforts of the Security Council and by encouraging the parties, in a spirit of good will, to pursue the talks aimed at achieving a political solution based on the draft Framework Agreement.

25. **Mr. Bennouna** (Morocco) noted that the new elements in the draft resolution just adopted were in line with the efforts of the Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy to identify an alternative to the Settlement plan, which was currently in deadlock. His delegation also noted the General Assembly's appeal to the parties to abide by their obligations to release without further delay all persons detained in camps.

26. His delegation also expressed the hope that in the interests of achieving a political solution, those participants in the talks that had not yet done so would clarify their position concerning the draft Framework Agreement on the Status of Western Sahara proposed by the Secretary-General, and that they would proceed to its implementation. In a spirit of good will and under the auspices of the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General, Morocco continued to be willing to hold negotiations, with a view to their successful conclusion in the interests of the entire Maghreb region.

27. **Mr. Baali** (Algeria) said that the adoption by consensus of the draft resolution on the question of Western Sahara again testified to the unwavering support of the international community for the Saharan people in their efforts to realize their inalienable right to self-determination through a free and impartial referendum without administrative or military interference in the affairs of Western Sahara.

28. The adoption of the resolution had been preceded by a rich and substantial debate at which many delegations had strongly reiterated their support for the cause of the people of Western Sahara and their desire for full realization of the settlement plan, which represented the only framework for resolving the Western Sahara conflict that had the agreement of both parties and the support of the international community.

29. As in past years, the Committee had reaffirmed the responsibility of the United Nations towards the people of Western Sahara in resolving the matter in accordance with General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) of 14 December 1960 on the granting of independence to colonial countries and peoples. Having urged both parties to the conflict to cooperate closely with the Secretary-General and his representatives in the implementation of the settlement plan drawn up under the auspices of the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity, the Committee had reaffirmed the central role and binding nature of the plan in achieving a just and lasting settlement of the question of Western Sahara.

30. His delegation welcomed the fact that that important resolution had been adopted by consensus, thereby sending a clear signal that there was a pressing need for the peace process in Western Sahara to be concluded and for those responsible for implementing the process to comply with the mandate entrusted to them by Member States.

Draft resolution on the question of Gibraltar, submitted under agenda item 18 (A/C.4/56/L.4)

31. *The draft resolution was adopted.*

Draft resolution on the question of New Caledonia, submitted under agenda item 18 (A/56/23, chapter XIII, section D)

32. *The draft resolution was adopted.*

Draft resolution on the question of Tokelau, submitted under agenda item 18 (A/56/23, chapter XIII, section E)

33. *The draft resolution was adopted.*

Draft resolution on the questions of American Samoa, Anguilla, Bermuda, the British Virgin Islands, the Cayman Islands, Guam, Montserrat, Pitcairn, St. Helena, the Turks and Caicos Islands and the United States Virgin Islands, submitted under agenda item 18 (A/56/23, chapter XIII, section F)

34. *The draft resolution was adopted.*

35. **Ms. Howe-Jones** (United Kingdom), speaking in explanation of position, said that, as in previous years, the United Kingdom had joined the consensus on the draft resolution.

36. Her delegation shared the Committee's concern about the problem of unemployment on St. Helena, and she drew the Committee's attention to the joint action of the United Kingdom and the Government of the Territory in that regard. The United Kingdom had set up a pilot fund to support economic diversification and improve employment prospects in its overseas territories and was currently discussing the terms of the fund with the St. Helena Government. Her delegation welcomed the call to continue discussions with the representatives of Pitcairn on how best to support the economic security of the Territory.

37. **Mr. Oyarzun** (Spain) said that his delegation had joined the consensus on all the draft resolutions submitted. It supported the principle of self-determination for all the Territories on which resolutions had been adopted.

38. The principle of self-determination was not, however, the sole principle which could be applied to the process of decolonization of the Non-Self-Governing Territories. In the case of some Territories, including Gibraltar, it was appropriate to apply the principle of territorial integrity, in accordance with the concept expressed in various General Assembly resolutions.

39. **Mr. Thapa** (Nepal), **Mr. Ri** Kyongil (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) **Mr. Al-Harthy** (Saudi Arabia), **Mr. Maitland** (South Africa), **Mr. Clodumar** (Nauru), **Mr. Okio** (Congo) and **Mr. Ngoh Ngoh** (Cameroon) said that, had their delegations been present when the vote was taken on the drafts submitted under agenda items 91 to 93, they would have voted in favour.

40. **Mr. Graveley** (Dominican Republic), **Mr. Guani** (Uruguay), **Mr. Yahya** (Djibouti), **Mr. Theron** (Namibia) and **Mr. Ouattara** (Burkina Faso) said that, had their delegations been present when the vote was taken on the draft resolution submitted under agenda item 91, they would have voted in favour.

41. **Mr. Kaid** (Yemen) said that, had his delegation been present when the vote was taken on the draft proposals submitted under agenda items 91 and 92, it would have voted in favour.

42. **Mr. Stuart** (Australia) said that, had his delegation been present when the vote was taken on the draft resolutions submitted under agenda items 91 and 92, it would have voted in favour. As for the draft resolution submitted under agenda item 93, it had intended to vote in favour but by mistake had pressed the wrong button.

43. **Ms. Howe-Jones** (United Kingdom), speaking in exercise of the right of reply to the statement by the representative of Spain, reiterated the position of the United Kingdom on the question of Gibraltar, which its representative had stated on 14 September 2000.

44. **The Chairman** said that the Committee had thus concluded its discussion of the agenda item on decolonization. He noted that there had been a fruitful exchange of views and that in most cases consensus had been reached, indicating the importance which the majority of delegations attached to the question of decolonization.

The meeting rose at 11.20 a.m.